

THIS IS SAN FRANCISCO

EDITED BY JESSICA BATTILANA + ALLISON MCCARTHY



The Other Café 30th Reunion Show featuring 25-plus comedians, including Dana Carvey, Kevin Pollak and Will Durst.

SEPT. 25 AT THE PALACE OF FINE ARTS, 3301 LYON ST., THEOTHERCAFE.COM

Stand-up Guy

Mill Valley resident and mega comedian Dana Carvey is back in the limelight, paying tribute to the place where he got his start.

Church Lady. Hans. Garth. Ross Perot. Dana Carvey's comedic repertoire is the stuff of legend. After seven seasons as a cast member on *Saturday Night Live*, a handful of blockbuster movies and an Emmy, the intensely private Carvey quietly stepped away from the stage to focus on his family. This month marks his return as the comedian teams up with his colleagues for The Other Café 30th Reunion Show, an event poised to be the biggest comedy act to hit the city since SF's stand-up heyday in the '70s and '80s.

The Other Café, which closed in 1993, was the space where Carvey spent his formative years creating and developing characters like the Church Lady. The café was an incubator for offbeat performances and a spot for newcomers to test out sketches. "Some people called it The

Other Café, and some people called it The Hash House," says Carvey. "Let's just put it this way—there was a lot of experimenting, on stage and off." The Upper Haight spot helped launch not only Carvey's career but also those of Paula Poundstone, Kevin Meaney and Ellen DeGeneres. It also played frequent host to heavy hitters such as Robin Williams, Jay Leno, Jerry Seinfeld and Whoopi Goldberg.

Carvey and his Other Café cronies could always be found at the now-defunct burger joint Clown Alley before shows, and they regularly hit up the Copper Penny for diner food afterwards. "No wonder I had a blocked artery by the time I was 42," he says.

Carvey's Church Lady went on to become one of his staple acts on *SNL*—which he starred in from 1986 to 1992—and, along with his celebrity impersonations,

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helped reverse the show's declining popularity. By the end of his tenure there, he says, "I was seven years older, seven years wiser, and I'd developed a habit of drinking 7 and 7s."

These days, he's spending his time writing, doing corporate gigs and working on new projects. On Sept. 25, Carvey will be honoring his roots, along with many of the famed club's former stars, at The Other Café 30th Reunion Show. Expect a comedy extravaganza for the history books—one night, 25-plus top comedians (the schedule includes Kevin Pollak, Will Durst and Kevin Meaney), as well as surprise guests. And what can we expect from Carvey, who will reemerge from comedic dormancy for the occasion? "I've perfected my Lady Gaga, and I must say it's quite good. The hard part was getting a properly fitted thong." —ALLISON MCCARTHY